

mark tobey
prints



5/75

Tobey 1970

Statement by the Artist

On the artist's 80th birthday he happened to have rediscovered the following statement, written twenty-five years earlier. In consideration of its particular reflections we would like to present it as a preliminary to this exhibition of prints.

'I am fifty-five years old as the crow flies from that cold December morning, 1890, in Centerville, Wisconsin. My art education is a Horatio Alger story except for the blaze at the end. My gods were in the beginning American gods: Harrison Fisher, Christy, and of course Gibson; gods that extolled the American Beauty, for where else did beauty exist except in that American Type of the 1900's sometime before the first World War when grace was an important part of my life and woman still held her sex a more complete mystery.

But there came a day when other gods were heralded, gods so much more powerful than those that existed in the Middle West that one's allegiance was overcome and one heard of Rembrandt and high art, or found out that art was a valid affair, a thing often accompanied by suffering, by effort that went unrewarded. New heavens were opening; I was travelling eastward, nosing my way back toward my ancestors, encountering on my way the surprise of Sorolla, of Zorn (the height, along with Sargent, of the "handling" bug), of Zuloaga, the smell of other places so dear to us Americans. My trunkload of American clippings, my second installment of gods—Foster, Guerin, the American sky was full of them and I knew them by their calligraphy—was being forgotten as the new stars arose on my horizon and I swung in my course toward brighter lights. Then when I seemed to be settled in that land where Velasquez, Holbein and others offered settlement and civilization, the Armory Show came as a powerful blight, a hoar frost that

promised everything once the old ground was cleared. The "Nude Descending the Staircase" (Marcel Duchamp) looked to me like an explosion in a shingle mill, which I thought was the right kind of reasoning to settle it for all time. But later, after the blaze of Bellows and Henri, I saw it again in the painter's studio, thinking this time what a wonderful abstraction.

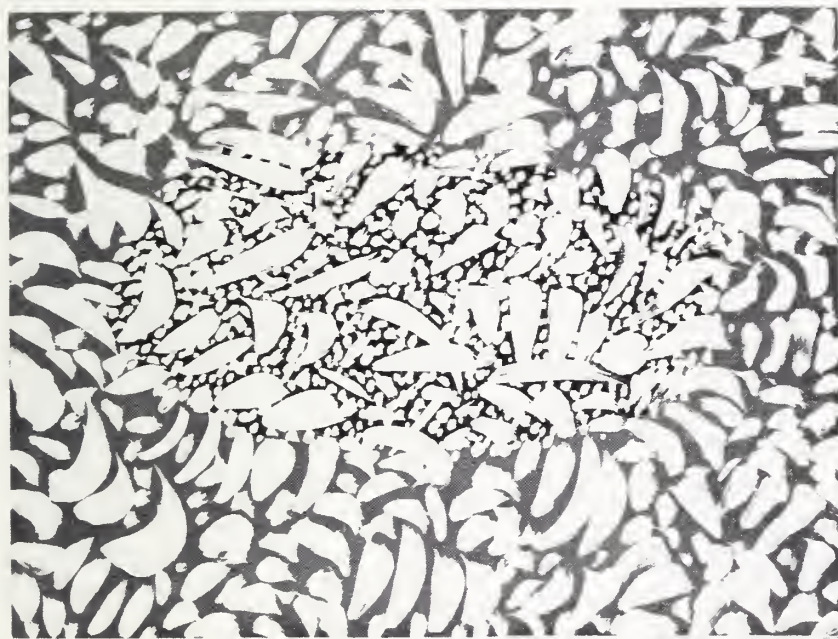
Many times my ship has almost foundered, many times the sky has been too dark to know where art was going. The 1920's were enough to turn any creative heart into an organ without blood. Then I saw the "Nude" again in Hollywood. It seemed full of the sorrows of the Son of Man. It's the Crucifixion, I thought. I have never seen it since.

There have been trips to Europe and long stop-overs in the interior of America and I have shuttled back and forth east-west, west-east like my fellow compatriots wondering what it was all about, some times looking for the American Painting, but not caring too much for that's not my job. Also regretting that the great cubist school of France didn't have more effect on the curriculum of our art shows, for its technique is powerful and illuminating.

Many have visited our shores and we have put on Russian caps and danced in Spanish boots. In this age of Great Transition we have a great deal of art activity, but activity can be one thing and the artist another; they can even be two ways of life which don't necessarily parallel. I am accused often of too much experimentation, but what else should I do when all other factors of man are in the same condition? Shall any member of the body live independently of the rest? I thrust forward into space as science and the rest do. My activity is the same, therefore my end will be similar. The gods of the past are as dead today as they were when Christianity overcame the Pagan world. The time is similar, only the arena is the whole world.

New seeds are no doubt being sown which mean new civilizations and, let us hope, cultures too. If I do anything important in painting some age will bring it forth and understand. One naturally looks forward to the time when absolutes will reign no more and all art will be seen as valid, with many thanks to Picasso and the brave men of European painting and to those who have fostered such ideas in this country. Shall we as we view the increasingly darkening sky, not hope for a Byzantium, some spot to alight the cultural values? For what else shall we live?"

Mark Tobey, 1945



Catalogue

All of the graphics are lent by Martha Jackson Gallery except number 61 which is from the Collection of Mrs. Kay Hillman.

1. *Untitled*, 1961. 3 color offset lithograph.
2. *Untitled*, 1961 (un-numbered). Lithograph.
3. *Winter*, 1961 (impression from un-numbered edition of 100). 2 color lithograph.
4. *Untitled*, 1965 (un-numbered impression). 4 color lithograph.
5. *Flight Overforms*, 1966 (154/200). 4 color lithograph.
6. *Composition*, 1966-67 (artist's proof, edition of 50). Lithograph.
7. *Summer Reflection*, 1967 (23/50). 2 color lithograph.
8. *Etude*, 1967 (45/48). Intaglio.
9. *Head*, 1967 (82/150). 4 color lithograph.
10. *Head*, 1967 (artist's proof). Lithograph.

11. *Head*, 1967 (hand-colored proof). Lithograph and watercolor.
12. *Vertical Composition*, 1967 (116/150). 4 color lithograph.
13. *Vertical Composition*, 1967 (proof). Lithograph.
14. *Horizontal Composition*, 1967 (98/150). 4 color lithograph.
15. *Season's Encounter*, 1970 (16/20). 5 color lithograph.
16. *New Baroque*, 1970 (15/22). 4 color lithograph.
17. *Claudia*, 1970 (10/20). 3 color lithograph.
18. *Number 1*, 1969-70 (4/46). 2 color lithograph.
19. *Number 3*, 1969-70 (14/60). Lithograph.
20. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (VIII/XV). Lithograph.
21. *Number 4*, 1969-70 (5/60). Lithograph.
22. *Number 5*, 1969-70 (12/60). Lithograph.
23. *Number 6*, 1969-70 (8/46). 2 color lithograph.
24. *Number 12*, 1969-70 (16/66). 2 color lithograph.
25. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (unique proof). Lithograph.
26. *Number 7*, 1969-70 (9/60). Lithograph.
27. *Number 10*, 1970 (25/50). Lithograph.
28. *Number 10*, 1969-70 (proof). 2 color lithograph.
29. *Number 10*, 1970 (proof). Lithograph.
30. *Number 10*, 1970 (proof). Lithograph.
31. *Number 10A*, 1969-70 (8/60). Lithograph.
32. *Number 11*, 1969-70 (6/50). Lithograph.
33. *Number 11*, 1970 (proof). Lithograph.
34. *Number 11*, 1970 (proof). Lithograph.
35. *Number 15*, 1969-70 (13/47). Lithograph.
36. *Number 16*, 1969-70 (3/50). 2 color lithograph.
37. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (unique proof). Lithograph.

38. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (proof). Lithograph.
40. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (unique proof). 3 color lithograph.
41. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (unique proof). 2 color lithograph.
42. *Untitled*, 1969-70 (proof). 2 color lithograph with pencil.
43. *Untitled*, 1970 (state proof). Aquatint.
44. *Untitled*, 1970 (state proof). Aquatint.
45. *Half and Half*, 1970 (196/200). 2 color lithograph.
46. *Gathering*, 1970 (196/200). 3 color lithograph.
47. *Blossoming*, 1970 (state proof). 2 color aquatint.
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54. *Transitions*, 1970 (suite of seven images) (6/75). Aquatint.
48. *Evocation*.
49. *After the Harvest*.
50. *Devoted*.
51. *Blossoming*.
52. *Summer Breeze*.
53. *Movements in White*.
54. *Trio*.
- 55-
60. *Six Impromptus on Omar Khayyam*, 1970. Aquatint.
 55. "And this reviving herb . . ."
 56. "With Earth's first clay . . ."
 57. "Ah, fill the cup . . ."
 58. "For in and out . . ."
 59. "Up from earth centre . . ."
 60. "There was a door . . ."
61. *Untitled*, 1961. 8 color lithograph. From Collection of Mrs. Kay Hillman.

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